

BOOK REVIEW

TONY RODD AND JENNIFER STACKHOUSE. 2008. **Trees: a Visual Guide.** (ISBN 978-0-520-25650-7, hbk.). University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94704-1012, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.ucpress.edu, orders@cpfsinc.com, 800-777-4726). \$29.95, 304 pp., color photographs, tables, glossary and index, 11" x 9".

Trees: A Visual Guide is a stunning book with many beautiful pictures, but this book is much more than a coffee table book. Authors Rodd and Stackhouse have given the reader a fantastic guide to all things tree. The opening section "A world of trees," introduces readers to the definition of what is a tree, some tree extremes, and the scientific naming of trees. The form and function of all the parts of trees—ranging from how basic parts function to how growth occurs, as well as survival in extreme environmental conditions—is presented in section two. Closely related to form and function of trees is tree diversity and design, which are explored in section three. The tree diversity and design section also includes a very intriguing and picture-laden section on remarkable trees of the world, including information on such trees as Baobab, cedar of Lebanon, Sequoia, and many more.

The authors next turn, in section four, toward various environmental community types and trees which are typical of such habitats. The ecology of trees and species relationships to the environment, as well as some typical animal species found in such communities, are presented. Ten community types are included in the book. An example of one community type discussed is the Savannas, typical in Africa, which is inhabited by trees such as Umbrella Acacias and animals such as Patas monkeys and giraffes, which have unique relationships with plant species in the region.

The remaining sections are "Trees and the human world" and "An indispensable resource" which explore the many uses humans have for trees and the importance of trees to man. The uses of tree and tree products by man are astounding: food, building supplies, medicine, music, art, transportation, tools, fibers and more. The authors include many environmental benefits, such as biodiversity, flood protection, and soil stabilization, which many readers may not have considered as important benefits of trees.

Trees: a Visual Guide serves as a beautiful presentation of the importance of trees to mankind and the planet. Authors Rodd and Stackhouse have written an easy to enjoy text with color photographs which truly accentuate the information presented. *Trees: a Visual Guide* is a fantastic book for your coffee table, as well as an informative text for those readers interested in all things trees.—Lee Luckeydoo, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 500 East 4th Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.